

TRIBUTE TO MR. KEN BURNS

HON. ROBERT W. NEY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 4, 2004

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, it is with sad tidings that I announce the loss of Ken Burns, a dedicated House employee that many of us had the pleasure of working with.

Ken began his career with the House working for House Information Resources as a Communications Specialist in November 1999. During his time there, Ken served as the PBX administrator and supported video conferencing for all congressional offices. Ken also served as a Move Coordinator during the last transition. He was always very helpful and dedicated to the customer.

Ken received numerous letters of recognition for his cheerful and positive attitude. He never hesitated to go the extra mile to make sure his customers were totally satisfied. He made himself available to assist customers no matter when he was needed. He was a real pleasure to work with and always maintained an upbeat attitude—even when you knew things were not going well for him.

And for the past year, Ken worked at the Recording Studio, handling all the video teleconferences for Members. He was very knowledgeable about the systems and stayed on top of new technologies. Ken was always very helpful in many areas of that operation—he helped answer phones at the front desk and operated television cameras in the House studios regularly. Ken's personality was infectious, always positive, upbeat, and never had a bad word to say about anyone.

I feel privileged to have known Ken as a person and know that he will be sorely missed by all who had the pleasure of working with him.

HONORING THE RETIREMENT OF
FIRE CHIEF MICHAEL P. BIRRELL**HON. JOHN D. DINGELL**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 4, 2004

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to my friend Michael P. Birrell on the occasion of his retirement from the Dearborn Fire Department after 29 dignified years of service.

Serving as the Chief of the Department since March 2000, Mr. Birrell has shown tremendous dedication and leadership throughout his long-lasting career. He joined the Department on December 9, 1975 as a probationary firefighter. Promoted to Firefighter 2 in 1980 and Firefighter 3, an engine driver, in 1985, Mr. Birrell's achievements resulted in him becoming Fire Lieutenant in 1990, Captain in 1994, and Battalion Chief in 1995.

In addition to serving in the Fire Department, Mr. Birrell finds many ways to channel his supportive energy into the community. He is a Certified Instructor of the Michigan Firefighter Training Council and a National Fire Academy Instructor of Incident Command and Emergency Response to Terrorism.

Mr. Birrell graduated from Saint Alphonsus High School in 1968 and attended Henry Ford

Community College and Eastern Michigan University. A veteran of the U.S. Army from March of 1970 to January of 1972, Mr. Birrell served with the Military Police and was honorably discharged as Specialist 4.

Mr. Birrell and his wife, Elaine, have one daughter, Kathleen, who is a senior at Edsel Ford High School. His stepson, Stuart Debrowsky, is also a Dearborn Firefighter.

As Mr. Birrell enters his retirement years, I would like to give him my best wishes for a relaxing and enjoyable future. I would like to thank him for all of his hard work and commitment to the Dearborn Fire Department and Dearborn community.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask that my colleagues join me in commending Chief Birrell for leadership in both his Department and community, as we celebrate his 29 years of dedication to the Dearborn Fire Department.

FREEDOM FOR LIBRADO RICARDO
LINARES GARCÍA**HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 4, 2004

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about Librado Ricardo Linares García, a prisoner of conscience in totalitarian Cuba.

Mr. Linares is an engineer who was expelled from Castro's totalitarian Communist Party in 1992 after he called for economic reforms. Following his eviction, Mr. Linares decided the most effective way to fight Castro's brutal repression was to join the dissident movement. Eventually, Mr. Linares became president of the Cuban Reflection Movement.

Between 1995 and November 1999, Mr. Linares was continually harassed, arrested, detained, and fined by Castro's ruthless machinery of repression. Despite these constant setbacks, Mr. Linares persevered in his quest to obtain basic human rights for every Cuban citizen. Unfortunately, on March 18, 2003, the tyrant Castro had Mr. Linares arrested and convicted on sham charges.

According to Amnesty International, in the sham trial verdict, Mr. Linares was accused of "using his human rights work as a front for alleged counterrevolutionary activities such as meetings, conferences and seminars."

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Linares is suffering because of the gross human rights abuses and outrageous repression that continue every day in totalitarian Cuba. Mr. Linares is languishing in the totalitarian gulag because he believes in basic human rights for every Cuban. It is that simple, Mr. Linares is confined in a dungeon because he believes in freedom and the tyrant Castro believes in repression.

My colleagues, we must stand as one and demand freedom for Librado Ricardo Linares García and every prisoner of conscience in totalitarian Cuba.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RUBÉN HINOJOSA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 4, 2004

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I regret that I was unavoidably detained. Had I been

present, I would have voted "yes" on rollcall No. 12.

HONORING JUSTIN GREGORICH

HON. MICHAEL BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 4, 2004

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Justin Gregorich, one of my young constituents who recently saved someone's life.

Justin was walking home from football practice last week when he witnessed an elderly man lose control of his car, drive into a retention pond, and begin sinking in the snake and alligator-filled water. Justin instantly dove into the water, and with the help of two other passers by, pulled the man from his submerged car to safety.

Justin's two helpers, Michael McBayer and Shawn Brady, live in Chairman BILL YOUNG's congressional district, which borders mine. Justin credited Mr. McBayer and Mr. Brady for saving the car's driver, though he said his only thought when he saw the crash was that "I gotta save that guy." I think that Justin's mother, Alice, must have taught her son to be humble and help others, which is exactly what he did that day. She certainly deserves credit for raising such an outstanding young man.

Mr. Speaker, Justin, Michael, and Shawn are heroes in the truest sense of the word. They disregarded their own safety for that of another. Their selfless actions should remind us all of the fundamental goodness and humanity that so many of our countrymen exhibit everyday. I urge our colleagues to join me in thanking them for their actions and for reminding us of the spirit of compassion and courage which makes our country great.

A BILL TO PROVIDE FOR TAX-EXEMPT
FINANCING FOR UNITED
NATIONS FACILITIES**HON. AMO HOUGHTON**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 4, 2004

Mr. HOUGHTON. Mr. Speaker, today I am joined by my colleague from New Jersey, DONALD PAYNE, in introducing a bill to provide for tax-exempt financing for new United Nations facilities. This is a bipartisan effort by the two of us, as the current Congressional delegates to the United Nations.

The bill is straightforward and, like a provision in effect before 1986, would allow the use of tax-exempt bonds for the building of new UN facilities, other than the UN Headquarters itself. As a result of the 1986 changes, the UN is now treated as if it were a for-profit company for purposes of tax-exempt bonds, much less favorably than charitable hospitals, universities or State or local governments.

Most recognize that the United Nations Secretariat and Headquarters facilities are now more than 50 years old and greatly in need of renovation and reconfiguration to increase the efficiency of UN functions, improve security and life safety, and reduce overhead and administrative costs.

Let me give you a few examples of the need for the renovation. Most of the building